

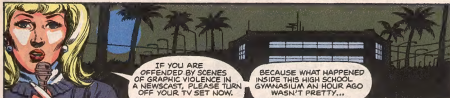
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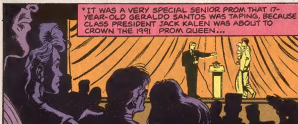
GIANT-SIZED SPECTACULAR
WHEN GODS WALK THE EARTH!

THE ETERNALS











"WHAT OCCURRED NEXT, AS SANTOS MOVED CLOSER, IS...WELL, IT HAS TO BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED--

"AGAIN, IF YOU'RE LIKELY TO BE UPSET BY SCENES OF GRAPHIC VIOLENCE, PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR SET AT ONCE.

"YOU HAVE BEEN *WARNED*."

"--ASSUMING IT'S POSSIBLE FOR THE MIND TO CREDIT SUCH A THING AT ALL.

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"I MUST EXPLAIN... SANTOS'S CAMERA WAS MALFUNCTIONING. THAT'S WHY THERE'S NO SOUND TO GO WITH THIS SHOCKING FOOTAGE...

"...THOUGH EYEWITNESSES AGREE THAT THE-- I CAN ONLY CALL IT THE *CREATURE*-- WHICH SUDDENLY EMERGED FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN, MADE ONLY A DEEP-THROATED GURGLING...

"...A NOISE LARGELY DROWNED OUT BY THE CRIES OF THE TERROR-STRICKEN CROWD--

"--AND THE DYING SCREAMS OF JACK AND JAYCIE KALEN.

"THEN SANTOS, APPARENTLY MESMERIZED BY WHAT HE WAS SEEING, GOT TOO NEAR THE MONSTROUS INTRUDER--

"--AND BECAME THE THIRD AND FINAL FATALITY IN TONIGHT'S TRAGEDY.

KKRAASSH

"THIS FOOTAGE, TAKEN BY A STUDENT WHO ONLY NOW GRABBED HIS OWN CAMERA, SHOWS THE HUGE INTRUDER MOMENTS LATER, FLEEING INTO THE NIGHT.

THIS IS SYLVIA POMEROY, AT SAN PABLO HIGH SCHOOL, LOS ANGELES.

THE HEROD FACTOR
PART ONE

YOU'VE JUST SEEN A REPLAY OF THE GRIM AND ALREADY INFAMOUS VIDEOTAPES OF LAST NIGHT'S MULTIPLE MURDER AT A CALIFORNIA SENIOR PROM.

THUS FAR, NO CLUES HAVE SURFACED CONCERNING THE POSSIBLE IDENTITY OR NATURE OF THE GROTESQUE KILLER.

BUT A SPOKESMAN FOR THE F.B.I. SAID TODAY THAT THE BUREAU IS CONSIDERING ENTERING THE CASE--

--BECAUSE OF LAST WEEK'S MURDER OF A SECOND SET OF TWINS, WHOSE MUTILATED BODIES WERE DISCOVERED IN AN AREA NEAR SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA.

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EACH OF YOU HAS NOW SEEN OUR MONITOR-TAPE TWICE.

WHETHER WE DESIRED TO DO SO OR NOT, IKARIS.

VIC AND JANET RHODES, ALSO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS, HAD BEEN MISSING SINCE--

NOW, I WOULD LIKE YOUR REACTIONS, ONE AT A TIME... STARTING WITH *SPRITE*.

WHY ME? BECAUSE I RESEMBLE ONE OF THOSE HUMANS-IN-THE-MAKING CALLED *TEENAGERS?*

WE'VE ALL SEEN MUCH DEATH AND DESPAIR OVER THE CENTURIES... BUT IT'S ALWAYS A PITY TO SEE *TRUE* YOUTH CUT SHORT.

YES, BUT WHAT HAS AN AMERICAN NEWSCAST TO DO WITH *US?* THOSE OF OUR RACE SO RARELY HAVE CHILDREN-- LET ALONE ONES THAT AGE.

BUT, *THENA*-- THAT MONSTROSITY WAS CLEARLY SOME CREATION OF THE *DEVIANTS*, AND THUS A CONCERN OF THE *ETERNALS!*

WE DEVIANTS ARE *ALWAYS* SUSPECT, EH, MAKKARI--

--EVEN THOSE OF US WHO DWELL HERE IN *OLYMPIA*, SUCH AS *KARKAS* AND MYSELF!

AT LEAST YOU *LOOK* LIKE AN ETERNAL, RANSAK--AND THUS WERE A *REJECT* FROM THE DEVIANTS' CITY.

BUT *I* WAS BORN SO HIDEOUS THAT EVEN THEY HATED ME--

--LABELING ME "*MUTATE*."

IT CANNOT HAVE ESCAPED ANYONE'S NOTICE THAT THAT *MONSTER* MOST CLOSELY RESEMBLED *ME*.

I ACCUSE NO ONE, KARKAS, LEAST OF ALL YOU.

STILL, LIKE MAKKARI, THESE ATTACKS CAUSE ME TO WONDER IF THE *TRUCE* BETWEEN ETERNAL AND DEVIANT YET STANDS.

AFTER ALL, WHAT CAN IT MEAN THAT WE'VE HEARD *NO NEWS* FROM THEM SINCE KRO BECAME THEIR RULER AGAIN?

THIS *SCROLL* WILL TELL YOU WHAT IT MEANS, MY FRIENDS--

--*THE SEARCH FOR THE* ***ORDAINED ONES*** *HAS BEGUN IN EARNEST!*

PHASTOS!? WE THOUGHT YOU WERE AWAY ON A PERSONAL MISSION LIKE THE *FORGOTTEN ONE*--

--OR *AJAK*, STILL STANDING GUARD OVER THE CELESTIALS' CITY IN THE ANDES.

AND DON'T FORGET *SERSI!* IT'D TAKE A WORLD-CLASS CRISIS TO DRAG HER AWAY FROM NEW YORK AND THE AVENGERS.

QUIET, SPRITE! I WANT TO HEAR WHAT OLYMPIA'S MASTER TECHNOLOGIST HAS TO SAY.



"THUS, WHILE OTHER ANTHROPOIDS DEVELOPED INTO *TRUE HUMANITY*-- A RACE SEEMINGLY BORN, ALAS, WITH A WAR CLUB IN EACH CLENCHED FIST--

"--THESE *CHANGED ONES* GAVE RISE BOTH TO GENETICALLY UNSTABLE *DEVIANTS*...

"...AND, OF COURSE, TO THE UNDYING *ETERNALS*.

"THE *DEVIANTS*, HOWEVER, BECAME PRIDEFUL ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE THE VERY *SPACE-GODS* WHICH HAD SPAWNED THEM--

"--AND ALL BUT AN ARK-FULL OF *HUMANS* PERISHED IN THE TORRENT OF DESTRUCTION VISITED UPON DEVIANT *LEMURIA* BY THE *SECOND HOST* OF CELESTIALS.

"IN TIME, THE DEVIANTS *REGROUPED* BENEATH THE SEA-BEDS...

"...MEANWHILE, WE *ETERNALS* DEVELOPED APART FROM MEN-- OFTEN MISTAKEN BY THEM AS DEITIES.

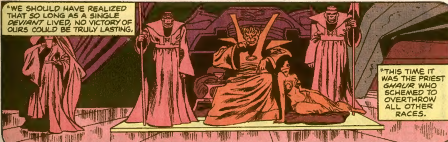
"HOWEVER, WHEN THE CELESTIALS' *THIRD HOST* CAME TO EARTH RECENTLY--

"--WE WERE FORCED TO END OUR ALOOFNESS, AND BATTLE THE *DEVIANTS* FOR THE SAKE OF THE ENTIRE PLANET!

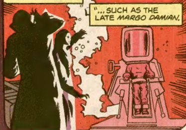
"OUR TRIUMPH OVER *KRO* AND HIS HORDES WAS AS MUCH A VICTORY FOR MANKIND AS FOR OURSELVES.

"AFTERWARD, MOST OF OUR FELLOW ETERNALS MELDED INTO THE ENTITY WE CALL THE *UNI-MIND*...

"...AND DEPARTED TO EXPLORE THE VASTNESS OF THE *COSMOS* ITSELF, AS HEIRS TO THE CELESTIALS.







"THIS TIME, SO DELICATELY BALANCED WERE THE SCALES OF FATE THAT, WHEN GHAUR METAMORPHOSED INTO A *TOWERING GIANT*--

"--ONLY AN ALLIANCE OF *ETERNALS* AND THE HUMAN WARRIORS KNOWN AS *AVENGERS* COULD STAY HIS GARGANTUAN HAND...

"...AND ONLY THE *UNI-MIND*, RETURNING BRIEFLY TO EARTH, COULD FINALLY *DESTROY* HIM.

ALL THAT IS BUT *PROLOGUE* TO WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM THE *SCROLL* I FOUND TODAY WHILE PORING OVER OUR MOST ANCIENT ARCHIVES.

YOU SEE, MY FRIENDS, I TOO KNOW OF THE HORRID *TWIN-MURDERS* OCCURRING IN MAN'S WORLD. BUT UNLIKE YOU, I KNOW THE *REASON* FOR THEM.

I KNOW WHAT THEY PORTEND FOR ***ETERNAL***--*FOR* ***DEVIANT***--*AND FOR* ***HUMANITY!***

THEN *TELL* US, PHASTOS! FOR, IF SOME DEVIANT IS BEHIND THESE BESTIAL SLAYINGS--!

HEAR, IKARIS, THESE WORDS PENNED BY AN *UNKNOWN SEER*, AN EON AGO:

"IN THE DAYS WHEN THE **ONE AWARENESS** *HAS DEPARTED EARTH A SECOND TIME, THE* **ORDAINED ONES**-- *TWIN OFFSPRING BORN OF THE MATING OF* **ETERNAL** *AND* **DEVIANT**-- *SHALL REACH THEIR EIGHTEENTH CYCLE, AND THEIR* **VAST POWER** *SHALL BE MADE KNOWN...*

"...AND THEY TWO SHALL **OVERTHROW** *ETERNAL AND DEVIANT AND HUMAN, AND* **SHALL RULE THE WORLD FOR ALL TIME TO COME!"**

"ONE AWARENESS"-- THE **UNI-MIND,** *RIGHT?*

THAT'S INSANE! ARE WE RULED BY *FORTUNE-TELLERS* SINCE I STEPPED DOWN, RATHER THEN GENETICS?

NO CHILD'S EVER BEEN BORN OF THE PAIRING OF ETERNAL AND DEVIANT!

BUT IT *FITS*, THENA! IF THIS PROPHECY IS GENUINE, THE CURRENT *DEVIANT MASTERS* MUST HAVE LEARNED OF IT ALREADY--

--AND SENT OUT A *MUTATE* TO KILL SETS OF *TWINS*, IN THE HOPE OF ENDING THE THREAT TO THEIR REIGN.

BE NOT *CERTAIN* THE MONSTROUS SLAYER ACTS FOR THE *DEVIANTS*, IKARIS.

...FOR THESE *"ORDAINED ONES"* SEEM DESTINED TO RULE *OLYMPIA* AS WELL AS THE *CITY OF TOADS*--AND ALL THE EARTH *BETWEEN!*

PHASTOS-- ARE YOU SAYING--?

IT MAY BE THAT THE *MONSTER-ASSASSIN* SERVES NOT A DEVIANT, BUT A RENEGADE *ETERNAL*--

--PERHAPS EVEN ONE WHO STANDS, AT THIS MOMENT, *WITHIN THIS VERY CHAMBER!*

PART II
IKARIS DESCENDING

LEMURIA, OCEAN-FLOOR CITY OF TWO MILLION DEVIANTS...

DEATH!

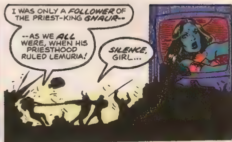
DEATH TO ALL LEADERS!

B-BUT I... I'VE DONE *NOTHING!*

PLEASE-- I AM *INNOCENT!*

NO DEVIANT IS EVER INNOCENT, FEMALE--

--MUCH LESS DIES IN THAT OVER-PRAISED CONDITION!
DEATH! DEATH TO ALL LEADERS!
BUT-- I WAS NOT A LEADER!


I WAS ONLY A FOLLOWER OF THE PRIEST-KING GNAUR--
--AS WE ALL WERE, WHEN HIS PRIESTHOOD RULED LEMURIA!
SILENCE, GIRL...


...YOU MERELY POSTPONE THE INEVITABLE--
--AND NOT BY MUCH, COME TO THAT!


AYE-- DEATH TO 'ER, SAYS HAAG!
WHAT'S HER CRIME, OLD WOMAN?
AND WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN OF LATE, ROBED ONE?
AWAY.


YOU MUST HAVE BEEN--
--NOT TO KNOW WHY IT'S "PURITY TIME" FOR THAT TRAITOROUS BAGGAGE, AS FOR ALL WOULD-BE LEADERS!

"PERHAPS IF KRO WAS STILL IN CHARGE--

"--YOU DO KNOW HE TOOK OVER AFTER THOSE CURSED ETERNALS DISPOSED OF GHAUR, DON'T YOU?

"WELL, KRO DIDN'T LAST LONG.

"JUST SAT ON HIS THRONE AND BROODED ALL THE TIME.

"SOME SAY HE WAS MOONING OVER THENA, THAT WITCH WHO USED TO COMMAND THE ETERNALS.

"WHATEVER. IT ALL JUST BECAME TOO MUCH FOR HIM, AND HE ABDICATED, HE DID--

"--JUST UP AND SNEAKED OUT OF LEMURIA, IN THE DARK OF ONE SLEEPTIME.

"A FOOL NAMED BRUTUS LED US FOR A TIME, BUT AFTER THAT--

"--THE WHOLE POPULACE ROSE UP TO EXACT REVENGE FOR OUR DEFEAT AT ETERNAL HANDS.

"MOBS KILLED THE PRIESTS FIRST, OFTEN WITH THEIR BARE HANDS.

"BUT THEN BROTHER VISARA CAME ALONG, AND DESIGNED THE SLICER, THERE.

"NEATER. MUCH NEATER."

BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHAT THE FEMALE'S CRIME WAS, HAAG.

WAS SHE AN ACOLYTE OF THE PRIESTS? THEIR MISTRESS, PERHAPS?

'COURSE NOT, FOOL. ALL THOSE HEADS ROLLED IN THE GUTTER LONG AGO.

THIS ONE SWEPT UP THE PALACE FLOOR FOR GHAUR AND HIS VILE ILK!

SHHH... HERE'S BROTHER VISARA NOW!

DEATH TO ALL LEADERS!

I COME AMONG YOU AS EVER, BROTHER DEVIANTS-- AN EQUAL AMONG EQUALS.

BUT BEFORE YOUR EXECUTIONER NECKS TODAY'S TRAITOR-- PLEASE PERMIT ME TO READ YOU THIS SCROLL FOUND AFTER LAST SLEEPTIME.

YES! READ, BROTHER VISARA!

IT IS OUR WILL THAT YOU READ IT TO US!

IT IS A *PROPHECY*, MY BROTHERS.

A PROPHECY THAT, WHEN *TWIN OFFSPRING* BORN OF THE MATING OF *ETERNAL* AND *DEVIANT* SHALL REACH THEIR 18TH YEAR--

--THEY WILL *OVERTHROW* ETERNAL AND DEVIANT AND HUMAN...

"...*AND SHALL RULE THE WORLD FOR ALL TIME TO COME!*"

NO! NO!

SPAWN OF *DEVIANT* AND *ETERNAL?* RULE US? *NEVER!*

YOUR WILL IS THE WILL OF *LEMURIA*, NOW THAT WE TAKE TO OURSELVES *NO LEADERS!*

BUT BE YOU EVER ON THE *ALERT*, BROTHERS!

YOU WILL WISH TO *REPORT AT ONCE* TO ME ANY DEVIANT YOU EVEN *SUSPECT* OF BEING PART AND PARCEL OF THIS *TREASON*, YES?



AND NOW, I MUST GO TEND TO *YOUR* AFFAIRS.

CARRY ON, EXECUTIONER.

AYE BROTHER VISARA.

ZZZZZ

NO...

TCHOP

DEATH TO ALL LEADERS!

PLUNK

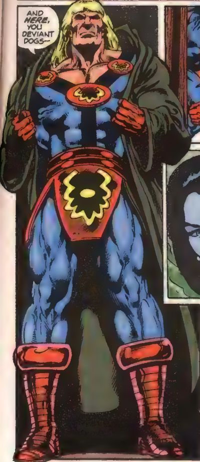
WELL... I'VE GOT TO GO MAKE DINNER.

WELCOME HOME, ROBED ONE.


A GOOD SHOW WASN'T IT?
I'VE SEEN BETTER.
MUCH CLEANER JOB THAN THE LAST ONE, HEY?

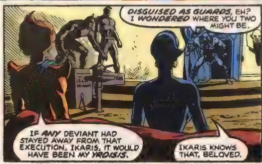

THINNER NECK.

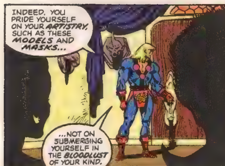

WELL, HERE WE ARE...

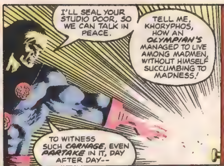

AND HERE, YOU DEVIANT DOGS--


--IS RETRIBUTION!
KRAK
IKARIS!
YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR FATE, THEN?

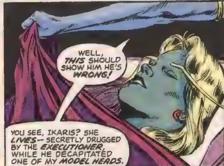

WHY SHOULDN'T EVEN AN EXPATRIATE ETERNAL RECOGNIZE HIS CHIEF?
AND WHAT KNORYPHOS KNOWS-- YRDISIS LEARNS.

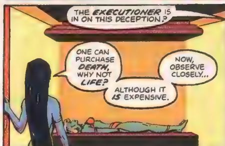

DISGUISED AS GUARDS, EH? I WONDERED WHERE YOU TWO MIGHT BE.
IF ANY DEVIANT HAD STAYED AWAY FROM THAT EXECUTION, IKARIS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MY YRDISIS.
IKARIS KNOWS THAT, BELOVED.

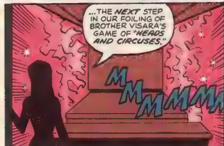

INDEED, YOU PRIDE YOURSELF ON YOUR ARTISTRY, SUCH AS THESE MODELS AND MASKS...
...NOT ON SUBMERGING YOURSELF IN THE BLOODLUST OF YOUR KIND.

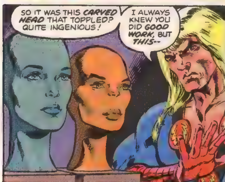

I'LL SEAL YOUR STUDIO DOOR, SO WE CAN TALK IN PEACE.
TELL ME, KHORYPHOS, HOW AN OLYMPIAN'S MANAGED TO LIVE AMONG MADMEN, WITHOUT HIMSELF SUCCUMBING TO MADNESS!
TO WITNESS SUCH CARNAGE, EVEN PARTAKE IN IT, DAY AFTER DAY--

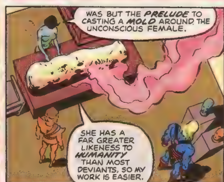

"DAYS" HAVE SCANT MEANING DOWN HERE, ETERNAL.
HE THINKS WE LET THE FEMALE DIE, YRDISIS.
HE DOES?


WELL, THIS SHOULD SHOW HIM HE'S WRONG!
YOU SEE, IKARIS? SHE LIVES-- SECRETLY DRUGGED BY THE EXECUTIONER, WHILE HE DECAPITATED ONE OF MY MODEL HEADS.


THE EXECUTIONER IS IN ON THIS DECEPTION?
ONE CAN PURCHASE DEATH, WHY NOT LIFE?
ALTHOUGH IT IS EXPENSIVE.
NOW, OBSERVE CLOSELY...


...THE NEXT STEP IN OUR FOILING OF BROTHER VISARA'S GAME OF "HEADS AND CIRCUSES."
MMMMMMM


SO IT WAS THIS CARVED HEAD THAT TOPPLED? QUITE INGENIOUS!
I ALWAYS KNEW YOU DID GOOD WORK, BUT THIS--


WAS BUT THE PRELUDE TO CASTING A MOLD AROUND THE UNCONSCIOUS FEMALE.
SHE HAS A FAR GREATER LIKENESS TO HUMANITY THAN MOST DEVIANTS, SO MY WORK IS EASIER.

WHAT?! YRDISIS-- ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT--?

AT THE PROPER MOMENT, I HAVE BUT TO *BREAK* THE MOLD, AND THE HAPLESS *DEVIANT*--

--STANDS BEFORE US A LOVELY *HUMAN* FEMALE, WHO WILL SOON WALK DOWN NEW YORK'S *FIFTH AVENUE* UNNOTICED BY ALL BUT HUMAN *MALES.*

NOT FAR FROM THE TRUTH.

YOU SEE, IKARIS, WE *SMUGGLE OUT* EVERY DOOMED SOUL WE CAN. NOT *ALL*, ALAS.

BETWEEN-TIMES, I PLAY THE *RESIDENT ALIEN* WHO LIVES ONLY FOR HIS MUSIC, AND FOR YRDISIS.

BUT TIME GROWS SHORT, AND I MUST ASK YOU IF YOU'VE SEEN--

--HIM!

"HIM" OR "IT," IKARIS--

--EVEN THE DEVIANTS' REPULSIVE *MUTATES* SEEM BUT PEACEFUL *LULLABIES*, BY COMPARISON!

THOSE *YOUNG HUMANS*, IKARIS-- DID IT KILL *MANY* OF THEM?

ENOUGH. BUT IT TRULY SEEKS ONLY *TWO*--

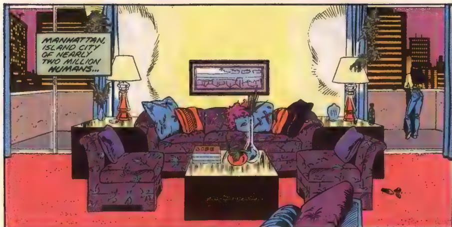
--THE VERY *TWINS* BROTHER VISARA READ OF FROM THAT SCROLL.

WHEN WE FOUND AN IDENTICAL ONE IN *OLYMPIA*, I THOUGHT THAT MONSTROSITY A *DEVIANT* CREATION.

SINCE COMING HERE, I'M LESS *SURE* OF THAT, SOMEHOW.

AND THAT MEANS-- THE MONSTER MAY HAVE BEEN SENT ON ITS UNHOLY MISSION--

--BY AN *ETERNAL!*



SERSI...

WHO--?

THENA!

WHAT BRINGS THE HIGH-AND MIGHTY FORMER QUEEN OF THE ETERNALS TO MY HUMBLE ABODE?

IT CAN'T BE THE PARTY I'VE GOT PLANNED FOR TONIGHT.

YOU AND I HAVE NEVER BEEN EXACTLY CLOSE...

DID PHASTOS CONTACT YOU ABOUT THE PROPHECY? ABOUT THE TWINS, BORN OF ETERNAL AND DEVIANT?

OF COURSE! I'M AS MUCH AN ETERNAL AS YOU, EVEN IF I DO PREFER TAVERN ON THE GREEN TO THE EMPTY ABODES OF OLYMPIA.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? SCARED OF A STILL-FURTHER DEMOTION?

SERSI...

...THOSE TWINS ARE--

--MINE!

SOMEWHERE HIGH AMONG THE SOUTH AMERICAN ANDES, THERE BROODS THE CITY HIDDEN FROM SIGHT.



FROM HUMANITY'S SIGHT, THAT IS.

ANY OF THE FEW ETERNALS STILL REMAINING ON OUR WOUNDED PLANET CAN SEE IT CLEARLY ENOUGH...

...ONCE THEY PIERCE THE VIBRATORY AURA SURROUNDING THE SPLENDORS WHICH ANCIENT INCAS BUILT, UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF GODLIKE ALIENS.

THIS ONE CAN PIERCE IT MORE EASILY THAN ANY.

THE BURDEN HE CARRIES THIS DAY IS OF ANOTHER KIND...

...KINDS.

HELLO, DR. DAMIAN.

AH... GREETINGS, IKARIS.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TO VISIT AN OLD MAN CAMPING OUT ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD?

PART THREE

THE GODS DO NOT MAKE LOVE IN VAIN...

BY NOW, DOCTOR, I'D THINK YOU'D CONSIDER YOURSELF A NATIVE.
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR FELLOW ETERNAL, AJAK--
--HE'S BEEN AWAY KEEPING BUSY SINCE HE RETURNED FROM MELDING WITH THE UNI-MIND.
I CAME TO TALK TO YOU.
ME?
CAN YOU TELL ME IF THIS ANCIENT SCROLL WE FOUND IS AUTHENTIC OR NOT?
IF IT IS, IT JUST MIGHT SPELL RENEWED WAR BETWEEN ETERNAL AND DEVIANT--
--WITH YOUR PEOPLE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME ABOUT YOUR WARS, IKARIS.
I LOST A DAUGHTER TO THE LAST ONE, REMEMBER?
I... KNOW, SIR.
HMMM. WRITTEN IN THE CELESTIALS' LANGUAGE, I SEE.
YOU RECOGNIZE THE TONGUE OF OUR CREATORS AT A GLANCE?
AS YOU SAID, I'VE BEEN HERE A WHILE--ALONE, EXCEPT FOR AJAK.
HE'S TAUGHT ME QUITE A BIT--INCLUDING HOW TO USE SOME OF THE LESS COMPLICATED OF THE CELESTIALS' DEVICES.
THIS ONE SHOULD HAVE YOUR ANSWER IN A MOMENT.
MMMM
IT'S GOOD TO SEE THE WAY YOU'VE TAKEN HOLD, DR. DAMIAN.
THIS PLACE IS AN ARCHEOLOGIST'S DREAM, IKARIS.
THE CHANCE TO STUDY TECHNOLOGY LEFT BEHIND BY TOWERING MAN-GODS WHO VISITED EARTH BEFORE THE HUMAN RACE EVEN EXISTED--
ACTUALLY, I MEANT--WELL, IT HASN'T BEEN MANY MONTHS SINCE MARGO WAS MURDERED BY THE DEVIANTS.
LIFE... GOES ON, IKARIS.

IN YOUR OWN WAY, I KNOW YOU LOVED HER AS MUCH AS I DID.
WE MUST EACH BEAR OUR HURT... AS BEST WE CAN.
THANK GOD, I STILL HAVE MY WORK HERE TO GIVE PURPOSE TO WHAT REMAINS OF MY LIFE.
AH...
YOU CAN READ THE RESULT FOR YOURSELF, I'M AFRAID.
THE MACHINE CONFIRMS THE SCROLL'S AUTHENTICITY.
THEN, SINCE THE DEVIANTS FOUND ONE JUST LIKE IT--
--THE WHOLE WORLD IS IN TROUBLE!
GOODBYE, DOCTOR. TELL AJAK I'M SORRY I MISSED HIM.
I WILL.
GOODBYE, IKARIS, AND--
--GOOD LUCK.
INVISIBILITY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER.
NEW YORKERS HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF SEEING THE STARS SHINING ABOVE THEIR POLLUTION-SHROUDED CITY THAN THEY DO OF SPYING TWO ETERNALS SOARING OVERHEAD.
I'M AFRAID I'M STILL TAKING IT ALL IN, THENA.
YOU'RE... A MOTHER?
THE MOTHER OF THAT PROPHECY'S HALFBREED TWINS-- SIRED BY A DEVIANT?
IT'S TRUE, SERSI.
SINCE IT WAS YOUR IDEA WE GO FLYING, AND THAT I MAKE THE HUMANS BELOW SEE US AS PIGEONS--
--MAY I ASSUME YOU ARE GOING TO TELL ME WHO THE FATHER IS?
OR WOULD YOU PREFER I REVIVE "TWENTY QUESTIONS"?
I SUSPECT YOU'VE ALREADY GUESSED...

DO YOU RECALL THAT TIME *FATHER ZURAS* LED *IKARIS, AJAK,* AND *ME* AGAINST SOME *DEVIANTS* HIGH ABOVE THAT CITY-- WHAT WAS ITS NAME AGAIN? YES, *BABYLON!*

IT WASN'T REALLY ALL THAT LONG AGO--PERHAPS 2500 YEARS!

"THINGS WERE GOING PRETTY MUCH OUR WAY--

ZZZK

"--AND I WAS FINISHING OFF SEVERAL OF THEM, SOME DISTANCE FROM THE MAIN BATTLE--

"--WHEN A *POWERFUL BURST* SHATTERED THOSE DEVIANTS, MY ENERGY-SPEAR--

"--AND VERY NEARLY *ME!*

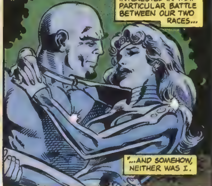
FTHOOOOOOM

"DAZED, HELPLESS, I BEHELD THEIR *WARLORD*...

KRO!

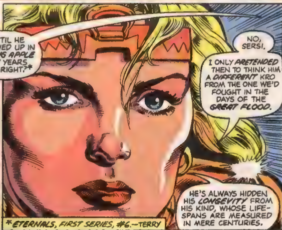
"HE WORE *ENERGY-GLOVES* WHICH COULD SCATTER MY MOLECULES--THE ONE WAY TO *KILL* AN ETERNAL."

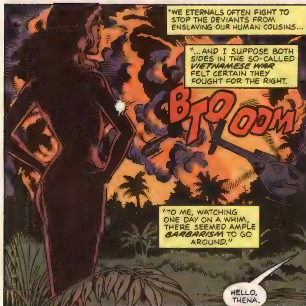

"BUT I LAY BRACED FOR A DEATH WHICH DID NOT COME."
GO AHEAD, DEVIANT--
--DISPERSE ME, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO!
IT WAS--
--BUT NO LONGER.

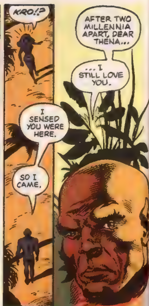

I KNOW YOU. YOU ARE THENA.
YOU ARE FAR TOO LOVELY--EVEN TOO BRAVE--TO BE DISPERSED.
"SUDDENLY, WARLORD KRO WAS NO LONGER INTERESTED IN THAT PARTICULAR BATTLE BETWEEN OUR TWO RACES...
"...AND SOMEHOW, NEITHER WAS I.

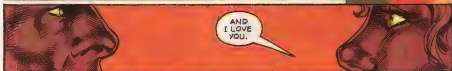

"WE TARRIED A WHILE IN A LAND FAR FROM BOTH OUR HOMES...
"...AND WE FELL IN LOVE."
BUT WE KNEW, ALL ALONG, THAT THERE WAS NO PLACE FOR EITHER OF US IN THE WORLD OF THE OTHER.
SO WE DID NOT MATE.
"MORE THAN YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT..."
SORRY. GO ON.
SAY, AREN'T THOSE THE ROCKIES?


"THEY ARE, ANYWAY... KRO AND I PARTED BEFORE LONG, AND DID NOT SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN UNTIL--


UNTIL HE SHOWED UP IN THE BIG APPLE A FEW YEARS BACK, RIGHT?*
NO, SERSI.
I ONLY PRETENDED THEN TO THINK HIM A DIFFERENT KRO FROM THE ONE WE'D FOUGHT IN THE DAYS OF THE GREAT FLOOD.
HE'S ALWAYS HIDDEN HIS LONGEVITY FROM HIS KIND, WHOSE LIFE-SPANS ARE MEASURED IN MERE CENTURIES.
*ETERNALS, FIRST SERIES, #6.--TERRY



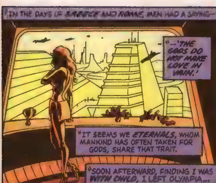


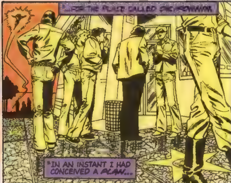


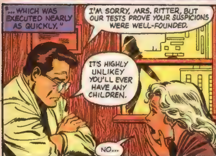


"LATER, IN THE COLD DARK OF NIGHT, THE MADNESS PASSED...

"...OR AT LEAST, I IMAGINED IT DID."







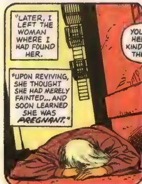




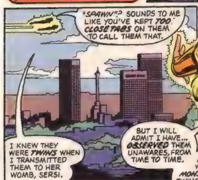
"I TOOK HER IN SECRET TO ONE OF THE MANY LABORATORIES SCATTERED ABOUT OLYMPIA...

SSSZZZZZZZ

"...AND THE TELEPORTATIONAL TRANSFERENCE WAS SWIFTLY

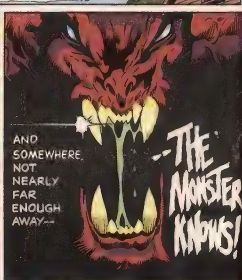


YOU DID HER A KINDNESS, THENA.
THERE'S A SOFT SIDE TO YOU I GAVE UP LOOKING FOR WHEN YOU LET THE *SPARTANS* CLOBBER *ATHENS*.
I DID *MYSELF* A KINDNESS.
IF THERE WAS NO PLACE IN OLYMPIA OR LEMURIA FOR *KRO AND THENA* TOGETHER--
--WHAT HOPE COULD THERE BE FOR THE *SPAWN* OF THAT UNION?



AND NOW, WITH THAT *MONSTER* KILLING TWINS--PROBABLY *LOOKING* FOR THEM--
WAIT! THERE THEY ARE NOW!
GREAT ZURAS!
BUT, YOU KNOW, EVEN FROM HERE--





HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DONALD AND DEBORAH!

SCHOOL BUS

WHA--? WHO'RE YOU?

MY NAME IS *THENA*.

THIS IS *SERSI*--

--AND WE'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU BOTH FOR A MOMENT... SOMEPLACE PRIVATE.

NEVER MIND *THAT*, DEB!

WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS, WHERE'D THEY *COME* FROM--

--AND HOW COME THEY'RE *FLOATING A FOOT OFF THE GROUND?*

PART FOUR

UP TO OLYMPIA

I'M STILL WAITING TO HEAR ABOUT THE SIEGFRIED AND ROY STUNT.
HE MEANS OUR LEVITATING.
STOP
REALLY-- I'M NOT THAT OUT OF TOUCH WITH THINGS ON EARTH.
BUT WE MUST HURRY, NOW THAT WE'VE DROPPED OUR INVISI-SHIELDS.
LOOK-- WHY NOT JUST TELL THEM YOU'RE THEIR MOTH--
BE QUIET, SERSI!
DONNIE, THIS IS WEIRD!
RIGHT! WE'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE-- EXCEPT TO GET A COP!
I TOLD YOU THIS WAS A STUPID IDEA, THENA.
BUT, NO, YOU HAD TO DRAG ME FROM NEW YORK.
ADMITTEDLY, YOU HAD TO COME A LOT FURTHER.
OF COURSE! THAT'S IT!
SKREEEEEE
WE'LL TALK TO THEM IN OLYMPIA!
HEY! WHERE ARE YOU TAKING MY BROTHER?
NOT TO MENTION--
YYIIIII
--ME!?
THENA AND I WON'T HARM YOU, DEBORAH.
D-DOES THAT INCLUDE NOT DROPPING US?
DEFINITELY.
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
JUST THINK OF THIS LITTLE OUTING AS A BIRTHDAY PRESENT.
BUT... OUR 18TH BIRTHDAY'S NOT TILL TOMORROW.
IT IS?
YOU ALWAYS DID GET THROWN BY THE INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE, THENA.

MAKKARI!
NOBODY BUT!
MY PSYCHO-BAND PICKED YOU UP WHILE I WAS CHECKING OUT SOME STEALTH-BOMBER SPEED TESTS OVER EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE.
YOU'VE BEEN "CHECKING OUT" THE HUMANS' FAST VEHICLES SINCE THE MESOPOTAMIANS INVENTED CHARIOTS!
"THE HUMANS"?
SPEAKING OF WHICH--LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE FOUND THE TWINS IKARIS AND PHASTOS ARE SO WORRIED ABOUT.
AND THE BOY, AT LEAST, KNOWS A GOOD I.L.V.* WHEN HE SEES ONE--
--EVEN IF IT DOESN'T REALLY HAVE WHEELS.
HOP ABOARD, ALL!
HYPER! YOU TWO ACTUALLY KNOW THIS GUY WITH THE RAD SET OF WHEELS?
WE WILL NEED YOU BACK IN OLYMPIA--ASSUMING YOU'RE ALL FINISHED PLAYING OVER-AGE JUVENILE?
*INERTIA-LESS VEHICLE. --TERRY
NOW MAYBE YOU'LL TELL US WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!?
YEAH! THIS ONE OF THOSE "INTERRUPTED JOURNEY" THINGS?
MAKKARI, WE'VE GOT TO GET TO OLYMPIA AS FAST AS--
IN A MOMENT.
ZZWOOOOOOSH
--POSSIBLE.
YOU WERE SAYING?
NOTHING.
THESE GUYS DON'T DORK AROUND, DO THEY?

WELCOME TO *OLYMPIA*--
--THE *ONLY* MAJOR WORLD CAPITAL WITH UNDER A DOZEN INHABITANTS!
WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE? I NEVER HEARD OF--
HEY! SOMEBODY'S *BUZZING* US!
JUST OUR ANSWER TO *PETER PAN*, THE BOY WHO NEVER GREW UP-- IN HIS CASE, LITERALLY!
THEY'RE *HERE*, *IKARIS*-- PRACTICALLY AHEAD OF MAKKARI'S *WARP-O-GRAM!*
WE SEE THEM, *SPRITE*.

CATCH THE TWO *RAMBOIDS*, DEB!
THEY LOOK OKAY TO *ME*.
WELCOME BACK, THENA... SERS!

THESE ARE THE ONES WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR?
THEY ARE.
PHASTOS, IKARIS... MEET DEBORAH AND DONALD RITTER, OF LOS ANGELES.
DON'T TELL ME-- THIS PAIR'S COME TO GIVE US A TOUR OF THE *NAUTILUS ROOM*.
A BIT *INSOLENT*, I SEE.

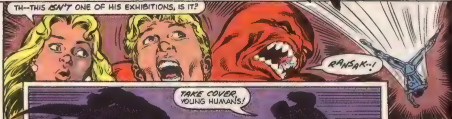
REMIND YOU OF ANYBODY *YOU AND I* MIGHT KNOW, IKARIS?
SHUT UP, SERS!
IKARIS, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY-- FOR *ETERNALS' EARS ONLY!*
I RATHER IMAGINED YOU DID.

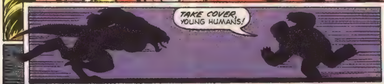
THIS I GOTTA *HEAR!*
BELIEVE ME, SPRITE-- YOU *WON'T* BELIEVE IT.
WE SHALL BE BACK SHORTLY, DEBORAH AND DONALD.
KARKAS... RANSAK...
WE SHALL KEEP THE YOUNG HUMANS COMPANY, IKARIS--
--WHILE YOU *ETERNALS* GO PLAY YOUR SECRET GAMES OF *WORLD-SAVING.*
NO *DEVIANTS* OR *MUTATES* ALLOWED.
IN ZURAS'S NAME, RANSAK--
YOU AND I SHOULD BE *GRATEFUL* TO BE WELCOME HERE, SINCE WE ARE BOTH *DEVIANT-BRED.*
I GROVEL FOR *NO ONE!*
NO ONE ASKED Y-- OH, NEVER MIND.
PERHAPS YOU CHILDREN WOULD LIKE A *TOUR* OF OLYMPIA.
NOT AS MUCH AS WE'D LIKE YOU TO STOP CALLING US *"CHILDREN."*
NO OFFENSE.
NONE TAKEN, DONALD.
UH... DID HE SAY YOU TWO ARE-- *DEVIANTS?*
THAT PHRASE DOES NOT MEAN TO US WHAT IT DOES IN *YOUR* WORLD, GIRL.
WE ARE A *RACE,* MUCH LIKE THE *ETERNALS* WHO BROUGHT YOU HERE--
--SAVE THAT WE ARE *MORTAL.*
NOW, YONDER IS THE *ARENA OF THE AGES.*

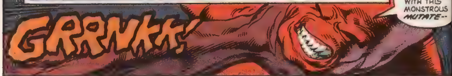
WHAT'S THAT? SOME KIND OF SPORTS STADIUM?
YES, IN FACT, I OFTEN GIVE *GLADIATORIAL EXHIBITIONS* THERE.
WHY, JUST LAST WEEK, I--











--SINCE *I MYSELF* AM NO LESS!

NNNGGGNN--!

WHOM

NGGRRNK!












GRRNK!
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
I STRUCK YOU WITH FULL FORCE, AND IT BARELY--


ZZZATTTCH
AAAAAA


THAT THING'S FINISHED HIM-- NOW IT'S COMING FOR US!
GET BEHIND ME, DEB!
DONNIE-- NO--!


YYIIII

HRRNK!

PART FIVE REUNION

PHASTOS--
ARE THEY--?
I DON'T KNOW, IKARIS...

I AM... NOT OVERLY CERTAIN *MYSELF*... ETERNALS...
PRAISED BE THE MEMORY OF *FATHER ZURAS*-- THEY ARE BOTH *ALIVE!*
BUT--MY *CHILDREN*--
WHERE ARE MY CHILDREN??
THAT'S EASY FOR *YOU* TO SAY!
EASY, THENA. THAT WON'T HELP.
KARKAS-- RANSAK-- *WHAT HAPPENED?*
F-FORGIVE ME, LADY THENA-- ETERNALS...
WE *FAILED* YOU.
A *MUTATE* OF GARGANTUAN PROPORTIONS FELLED US--
--AND *TOOK* THE YOUNG HUMANS.
WE'LL BOTH ACCEPT... ANY PUNISH-MENT GIVEN US...
STOP TALKING *NONSENSE*, RANSAK!
CLEARLY, YOU BOTH GAVE YOUR ALL TO DEFEND THE TWINS...
...BUT THIS *MUTATE*, IF SUCH IT TRULY WAS, WAS OF A KIND EVEN *YOUR* FIGHTING PROWESS COULDN'T HANDLE.
IF THERE IS ANY FAULT, IT'S *THENA'S*--
--FOR KEEPING IT A SECRET THAT THOSE CHILDREN WERE *HERS*, UNTIL MERE MOMENTS AGO!
WHAT? THENA-- IS THIS *TRUE?*

YES, TO MY UNDYING *SHAME*.

BUT WHAT MATTERS NOW IS *THEIR LIVES*.

SINCE THE INTRUDER DIDN'T SLAY THEM HERE, HE MUST HAVE TAKEN THEM BACK TO *LEMURIA*.

AND THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING NOW-- WITH OR *WITHOUT* THE REST OF YOU...

NO!

I LEAD THE ETERNALS NOW.

WE WILL GO TO LEMURIA -- BUT YOU WILL *NOT!*

AND WHAT DO I--?

YOU WILL SEEK OUT *KRO*--YOUR FORMER LOVER, AND THE DEVIANTS' FORMER RULER!

HE MAY BE ABLE TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON EVENTS--*IF* HE ISN'T BEHIND THE MONSTER *HIMSELF*.

KRO WOULD *NEVER* VIOLATE THE SANCTITY OF OLYMPIA!

THEN *PROVE* IT, THENA--

--BY *FINDING* THE FATHER OF YOUR CHILDREN!

ONCE MORE, THE *ETERNALS* FLY OFF TO GRANDEUR AND TO GLORY--

--AND WE WHO ARE *DEVIANT-SPAWNED* REMAIN BEHIND, UNTRUSTED.

THEY *ALSO* SERVE, RANSAK, WHO ONLY STAND AND--

I DO NOT KNOW WHY I STARTED TO SAY THAT.

I DO NOT TRULY *BELIEVE* IT.

YOU WERE A WEE BIT *HARD* ON THENA BACK THERE, WEREN'T YOU, IKARIS?

SHE BROKE THE *CODE* WE HAVE LIVED BY FOR MILLENNIA, BY MATING WITH A DEVIANT...

...AND IN DOING SO, SHE MAY HAVE BROUGHT *RUIN* DOWN UPON THE ENTIRE *PLANET*.

SOON, OVER THE DEEPEST PART OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN, THE ETERNALS' CRAFT SWERVES DOWNWARD TO CLEAVE THE BECKONING WAVES.

AND, ERE LONG, WITH MAKKARI STAYING BEHIND TO GUARD THE VESSEL...

...FOUR BRIGHTLY-CLAD FIGURES SWIM POWERFULLY TOWARD A REMOTE CORNER OF A SPRAWLING UNDERWATER FORTRESS-CITY.

THE DEVIANTS ARE TOO *DISORGANIZED* THESE DAYS EVEN TO KEEP A CAREFUL WATCH.

THAT'S HOW I GAINED ENTRANCE SO EASILY BEFORE.

AND, INSIDE THE WATER-PROOF WALLS...

WE'RE READY, SERSI.

ACTUALLY, I'VE ALWAYS *PREFERRED* TO TURN MEN INTO *PIGS*--

--*TYPE CASTING*, YOU SEE--

-- BUT IF IKARIS *WANTS* DEVIANT...

...IKARIS *GETS* DEVIANT.

YOU LOOK PRETTY RAVISHING *YOURSELF!*

HMMM... THE DEVIANTS ARE STILL DISPLAYING THE SAME REVOLUTIONARY FERVOR I NOTED BEFORE-- MISTAKING IT FOR "*FREEDOM*."

Y-YOU'RE *SURE* NONE OF THEM CAN TELL *WE'RE* NOT REALLY DEVIANTS, AREN'T YOU, SERSI?

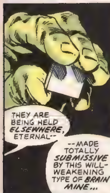
IF NOT, SPRITE, WE'LL THROW *YOU* TO THEM FIRST.

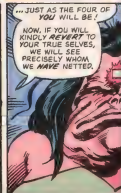
GULP!

HERE'S THE PLACE WE'RE LOOKING FOR...











AAAAAAHH--!

DEVIANTS! IT WOULD APPEAR DEAR SERSI'S BRAIN MINE IS SOMEWHAT LESS EFFECTIVE THAN THOSE OF THE OTHERS.

REPLACE IT, PLEASE, AT ONCE!

THE CONTENTS OF *THIS* ARE WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE, EH, ETERNALS?

THIS *SCROLL*, RECENTLY LEFT WITH ME UNDER QUITE *MYSTERIOUS* CIRCUMSTANCES.

SOMEONE, IT APPEARS, *WANTS* BOTH OUR RACES TO KNOW THEIR INDEPENDENCE IS *MENACED* BY THESE *HALFBREEDS*.

YES, IKARIS? YOU HAVE MY LEAVE TO SPEAK.

DO YOU... HAVE THE... HALF-BREEDS?

I? ALAS, I ONLY WISH WE *DID!*

YRDISIS AND KHORYPHOS WERE OUR FIRST TWO *SUSPECTS*, BEING A MATED PAIR, DEVIANT AND ETERNAL.

BUT IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT THEY KNOW *NOTHING*.

STILL, WE *SHALL* FIND THEM, NEVER FEAR--FOR OUR *SECURITY*, NOT TO MENTION THE *POWER* I PERSONALLY EXERCISE ON BEHALF OF MY BROTHER DEVIANTS IS AT STAKE.

WE SHALL *FIND* THE "*ORDAINED ONES*"--AND WE SHALL *KILL* THEM.

THOUGH *YOU*, OF COURSE, WILL NOT SURVIVE TO *WITNESS* THEIR END.

GUARDS! TAKE THIS SCUM BEFORE THE *PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY!*

IT IS TIME WE HAD ANOTHER *EXECUTION*--BY *DISPERSAL!*

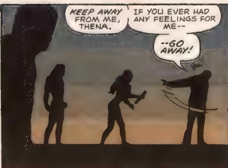
AND, IN EARTH'S POLAR WASTES...

I STILL DON'T LIKE THIS, THENA.

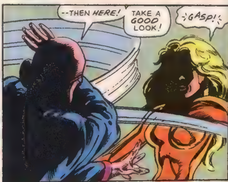
I DIDN'T FORCE YOU AND RANSAK TO COME ALONG, KARKAS.


BUT SURELY, IS IT NOT UNLIKELY THAT THE DEVIANT KRO WOULD HAVE CHOSEN TO MAKE THE PLACE OF HIS SELF-IMPOSED EXILE...
...THE FORMER DOMAIN OF THE POLAR ETERNALS?
NO. WE HAD A...TRYST HERE, UNDER THE VERY EYES OF THE ETERNALS.
KRO SEEMED SMITTEN WITH THE REGION, WHOSE ICE AND SNOW, HE SAID, MATCHED THE COLD HE FELT IN HIS HEART.
NO ICIER THAN MY OWN--WHEN I HAVE A CHANCE TO PAY THAT MUTATE BACK FOR THE PERMANENT SCAR HE HAS GIVEN ME!
NOW THAT THE POLAR ETERNALS HAVE ABANDONED IT, TO BECOME PART OF THE UNI-MIND, I CAN THINK OF NO PLACE KRO WAS MORE LIKELY TO GO--
--THAN THROUGH THE GIGANTIC SPINNING MECHANISM TO REACH--
--THE PYRAMID OF THE WINDS!
LOOK, THENA--RANSAK! THERE IS SOMEONE HERE!









BEHOLD THE DEVIANT WHO ONCE ADORED YOU--

--NOW GROWN AGONIZINGLY OLD--

--AND DYING!

PART SIX

LAWLESS IN LEMURIA

WELL, THENA?

ARE YOU RENDERED SPEECHLESS BY MY WRINKLES-- APPALLED BY MY DECREPIT STATE?

NO. I WAS MERELY... STARTLED.

BUT--YOU SAY YOU ARE DYING?

HAVE THE YEARS FINALLY OVERTAKEN YOU--

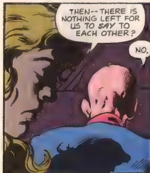
--YOU, WHO HAVE LIVED SO MANY MORE LIFETIMES THAN MOST DEVIANTS THAT THEY IMAGINED THERE WERE MANY KROS SUCCEEDING EACH OTHER OVER THE CENTURIES?

I WILLED MYSELF TO AGE, AT LAST.

I HAVE LIVED TOO LONG, AND ALL HAS TURNED TO ASHES IN MY MOUTH.

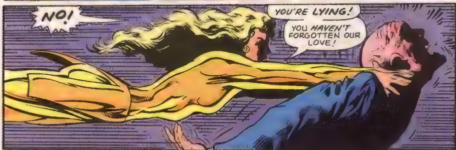
NEITHER LOVE NOR POWER MEANS ANYTHING TO ME, ANY LONGER.

JUST GO, PLEASE-- AND LEAVE ME HERE, TO DIE IN PEACE!


THEN-- THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR US TO SAY TO EACH OTHER?
NO.


I WANT TO DIE ALONE... FORGOTTEN--


--JUST AS I HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT I EVER LOVED.

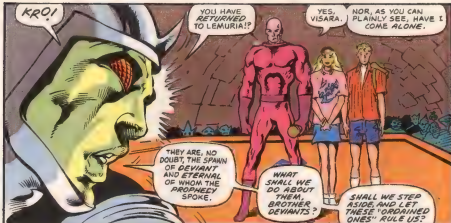

NO!
YOU'RE LYING!
YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN OUR LOVE!

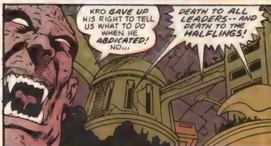

THENA-- HAVE YOU GONE MAD?
THE DEVIANT'S SO AGED-- SO FRAIL-- YOU MIGHT HAVE KILLED HIM, HERE AND NOW!
I--
--DON'T--

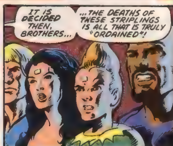

--CARE!


TRULY, RANSAK, I BELIEVE SHE HAS LOST HER MIND!
DO YOU? THEN OBSERVE KARKAS--
--LOOK, RANSAK--
--BEHOLD KRO!

SOON, BENEATH THE SEA...
DEATH TO ALL LEADERS, MY BROTHER DEVIANTS--
--EVEN TO ME, IF I WERE TO DREAM OF PRETENDING TO BE OTHER THAN THE FIRST AMONG MANY EQUALS!
THIS ETERNAL SCUM HAS DARED TO INVADE OUR SACRED CITADEL--
--TO SHATTER THE UNSPOKEN TRUCE BETWEEN OUR TWO RACES.
WE DEAL OUT DEATH TO ALL LEADERS...
...BUT IT IS NOT FOR ME TO DECIDE THE FATE OF THESE INTERLOPERS-- THESE SPIES!
WHAT IS YOUR VERDICT, BROTHER DEVIANTS?
DEATH! DEATH TO ALL ETERNALS!
DEATH!
YOU HAVE HEARD THE DEVIANTS' VERDICT, ETERNALS.
AND YOU ARE TOO ASHAMED--TOO RACKED WITH GUILT-- EVEN TO RESPOND.
BROTHER GUARDS! IN THE NAME OF ALL DEVIANTS-- PREPARE TO EXECUTE THE ETERNALS BY MOLECULAR DISPERSAL!
RAISE DISPERSATRON.
AIM DISPERSATRON.
FI--
HOLD!

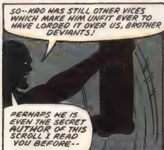

KRO!
YOU HAVE RETURNED TO LEMURIA!?
YES, VISARA.
NOR, AS YOU CAN PLAINLY SEE, HAVE I COME ALONE.
THEY ARE, NO DOUBT, THE SPAWN OF DEVIANT AND ETERNAL OF WHOM THE PROPHECY SPOKE.
WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THEM, BROTHER DEVIANTS?
SHALL WE STEP ASIDE, AND LET THESE "ORDAINED ONES" RULE US?


KRO GAVE UP HIS RIGHT TO TELL US WHAT TO DO WHEN HE ABDICATED! NO...
DEATH TO ALL LEADERS--AND DEATH TO THE HALFLINGS!

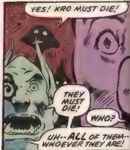

IT IS DECIDED THEN, BROTHERS...
...THE DEATHS OF THESE STRIPLINGS IS ALL THAT IS TRULY "ORDAINED"!


AND KRO SHALL PERISH LIKE ALL OTHER LEADERS--
--ALONG WITH THESE ETERNALS--AND YONDER CHILDREN OF AN UNKNOWN MATING!


I SHALL TELL YOU WHO THESE TWINS ARE, VISARA!
THEY ARE MY CHILDREN--MINE, AND THENA'S!

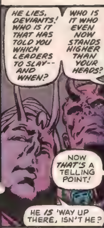

SO--KRO HAS STILL OTHER VICES WHICH MAKE HIM UNFIT EVER TO HAVE LORDED IT OVER US, BROTHER DEVIANTS!
PERHAPS HE IS EVEN THE SECRET AUTHOR OF THIS SCROLL I READ YOU BEFORE--

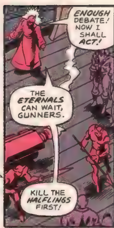

--A PROPHECY WHICH SPELLS OUT THEIR FUTURE MASTERY OVER US!

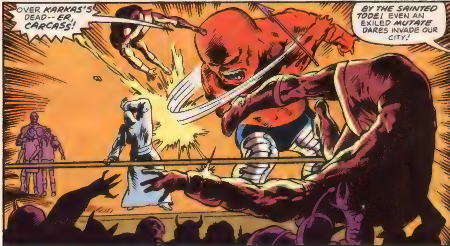

YES! KRO MUST DIE!
THEY MUST DIE!
WHO?
UH--ALL OF THEM--WHOEVER THEY ARE!

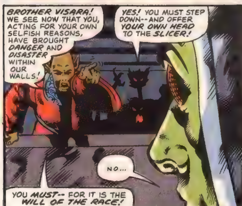

CONDEMN ME, DEVIANTS...
...BUT ALSO CONDEMN HIM WHO HAS BECOME YOUR LEADER--
--VISARA HIMSELF!


FOOL! YOUR TRICKS WILL NOT WORK HERE!
MY BROTHERS KNOW WE HAVE NO LEADERS NOW!


HE LIES, DEVIANTS! WHO IS IT THAT HAS TOLD YOU WHICH LEADERS TO SLAY-- AND WHEN?
WHO IS IT WHO EVEN NOW STANDS HIGHER THAN YOUR HEADS?
NOW THAT'S A TELLING POINT!
HE IS 'WAY UP THERE, ISN'T HE?

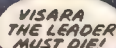

ENOUGH DEBATE! NOW I SHALL ACT!
THE ETERNALS CAN WAIT, GUNNERS.
KILL THE HALFLINGS FIRST!


OVER KARKAS'S DEAD--ER, CARCASS!
BY THE SAINTED TODE! EVEN AN EXILED MUTATE DARES INVADE OUR CITY!

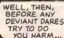

BROTHER VISARA! WE SEE NOW THAT YOU, ACTING FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH REASONS, HAVE BROUGHT DANGER AND DISASTER WITHIN OUR WALLS!
YES! YOU MUST STEP DOWN--AND OFFER YOUR OWN HEAD TO THE SLICER!
NO...
YOU MUST-- FOR IT IS THE WILL OF THE RACE!


TO THE GREAT ABYSS WITH THE "WILL OF THE RACE"!
STOP HIM!


YOU NEED HAVE NO FEARS ON *THAT* SCORE, DEVIANTS.
I HAVE HIM.
AND NOW--
--*YOU* HAVE HIM!
KILL HIM!

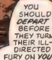

VISARA THE LEADER MUST DIE!


NNOOO


SUCH *INACTION* IN THE MIDST OF *VIOLENCE* IS NOT TO YOUR LIKING, IS IT ETERNALS?
BUT YOUR *COLLECTIVE WILLS* HAVE BEEN SNAPPED BY VISARA'S BRAIN MINES.
WELL, THEN, BEFORE ANY DEVIANT DARES TRY TO DO YOU HARM...

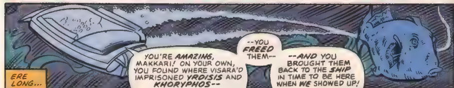

...I SHALL GIVE YOU *BACK* YOUR WILLS!
MY THANKS ...KRO.
AND NOW...

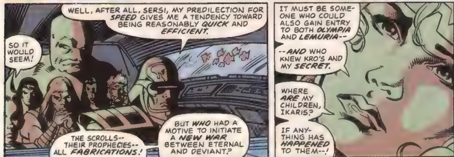

...THE "*TWINS*" MAY RETURN TO THEIR TRUE FORMS:
THENA AND *RANSAK.*
HIGH TIME!

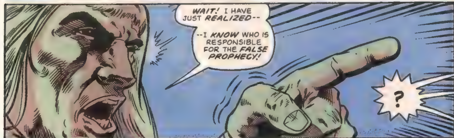

THE DEVIANTS ARE DESTROYING EACH OTHER--AND EVERYTHING ELSE THEY CAN GET THEIR HANDS ON.
SHALL WE *JOIN* THEM, ETERNALS?
NO. THIS BLOOD-LETTING DOES NOT CONCERN US, RANSAK.
YOU SHOULD *DEPART* BEFORE THEY TURN THEIR ILL-DIRECTED FURY ON *YOU.*

AND WHAT OF *YOU*, KRO? WILL YOU COME WITH US?
THEIR FORMER MASTER WILL NOT BE WELCOME IN THIS *FIERCE NEW LEMURIA*...
NONETHELESS, I SEE NOW THAT MY PLACE IS WITH MY MISGUIDED *RACE*.
INSTEAD OF SULKING IN THE POLAR REGIONS, CREATING AN *IMAGE* OF YOURSELF AS A *DYING ANTIQUE*?
I HAD FLED LEMURIA AND THE THRONE FOR *LONGING* FOR YOU...
...BUT I DESPAIRED OF YOUR *LOVE*-- AND I DID NOT WANT YOUR *PITY*.
THUS, I MADE MYSELF APPEAR *OLD* AND *FAILING*, TO DRIVE YOU AWAY.
YET, IN THE END, I WAS *GLAD* WHEN, IN YOUR RAGE, YOU *SAW THROUGH* MY RUSE.
LOVE CLEARED *MY* EYES-- WHEN I SAW *YOURS* SHED A TEAR, DESPITE YOUR HARSH WORDS.
IF YOU'D ONLY COME TO *OLYMPIA*--
NO. LIVE OR DIE, I WILL NOT FLEE MY RESPONSIBILITIES A *SECOND* TIME.
IF I SURVIVE, PERHAPS I CAN SUSTAIN THE *TRUCE* BETWEEN DEVIANT AND ETERNAL.
WHATEVER HAPPENS-- IT WILL BE ENOUGH FOR ME TO KNOW THAT THENA STILL LOVES ME.
AND ALWAYS *WILL*.
FARE YOU WELL, KRO.
THENA... I--
PLEASE, SERSI...
...I WOULD BE *ALONE* FOR A TIME.


BUT-- WHAT OF THE TWINS?
THEY HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY A MUTATE--
--YET ONE CLEARLY NOT UNDER VISARA'S COMMAND.
DID SOME OTHER DEVIANT PERHAPS TRY TO FORESTALL THE SCROLL'S PROPHECY?
IMPOSSIBLE, KRO! I FOUND OURS!
WHERE YOU WERE MEANT TO, PHASTOS.
SOMEONE WISHED TO CAUSE A CATASTROPHIC WAR BETWEEN OUR TWO RACES!
IF ONE DID, HE IS A FOOL--
--FOR THIS SCROLL IS A FORGERY--AND DOUBTLESS THE OTHER IS, AS WELL!
EVEN THE CELESTIALS COULD NOT SEE THE FUTURE--ELSE THEY'D NOT HAVE COME TO EARTH TO JUDGE IT.


IF YOU NEED MORE TANGIBLE PROOF--THERE ARE INTERNAL DISCREPANCIES OF LANGUAGE WHICH PROVE THE SCROLLS TO BE OF RELATIVELY RECENT VINTAGE.
NO OFFENSE, PHASTOS, BUT IN SUCH MATTERS I AM EVEN MORE THE SCHOLAR THAN YOU.
COME, EVERYONE!


ERE LONG...
YOU'RE AMAZING, MAKKARI! ON YOUR OWN, YOU FOUND WHERE VISARA'D IMPRISONED YRDISIS AND KHORYPHOS--
--YOU FREED THEM--
--AND YOU BROUGHT THEM BACK TO THE SHIP IN TIME TO BE HERE WHEN WE SHOWED UP!
WELL, AFTER ALL, SERSI, MY PREDILECTION FOR SPEED GIVES ME A TENDENCY TOWARD BEING REASONABLY QUICK AND EFFICIENT.
SO IT WOULD SEEM!
THE SCROLLS--THEIR PROPHECIES--ALL FABRICATIONS!
BUT WHO HAD A MOTIVE TO INITIATE A NEW WAR BETWEEN ETERNAL AND DEVIANT?
IT MUST BE SOMEONE WHO COULD ALSO GAIN ENTRY TO BOTH OLYMPIA AND LEMURIA--
--AND WHO KNEW KRO'S AND MY SECRET.
WHERE ARE MY CHILDREN, IKARIS?
IF ANYTHING HAS HAPPENED TO THEM--!


WAIT! I HAVE JUST REALIZED--
--I KNOW WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FALSE PROPHECY!
?

PART SEVEN

THE UNMASKING

WHY DID YOU DIRECT ME TO FLY *HERE*, IKARIS?

AND *WHY*, IN THE NAME OF THE UNI-MIND, WON'T YOU TELL US WHAT AND WHOM YOU *SUSPECT?*

IN THE *AVENGERS*, WE ALWAYS--

THE *ETERNALS* ARE NOT THE AVENGERS.

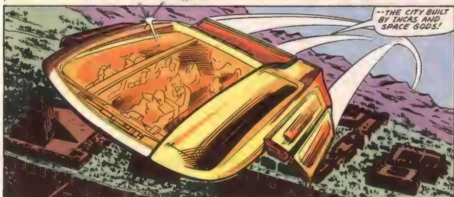
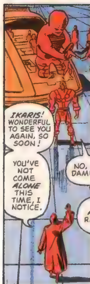
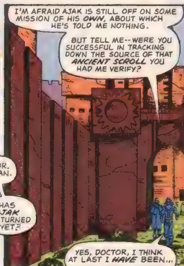
IF *THENA* CAN TRUST IKARIS TO THE POINT OF SILENCE, SERSI-- SURELY *YOU* CAN.

MY THANKS, PHASTOS... THENA.

AT LEAST *THIS* TIME I HOPE I DON'T HAVE TO RUN AROUND DISGUISED AS SOME UGLY *DEVIANT!*

YECCH!

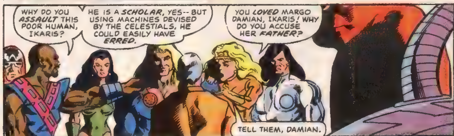

I HAVE KEPT MY OWN COUNSEL, ETERNALS, BECAUSE-- EVEN THOUGH I AM NOW POSITIVE WHO HAS CAUSED ALL THIS MISCHIEF--
--STILL I CAN SCARCELY BRING MYSELF TO CREDIT MY OWN DEDUCTIONS!
IKARIS...

...WE HAVED ARRIVED AT OUR DESTINATION...

--THE CITY BUILT BY INCAS AND SPACE GODS!

IKARIS! WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SO SOON!
YOU'VE NOT COME ALONE THIS TIME, I NOTICE.
NO, DR. DAMIAN.
HAS AJAK RETURNED YET?

I'M AFRAID AJAK IS STILL OFF ON SOME MISSION OF HIS OWN, ABOUT WHICH HE'S TOLD ME NOTHING.
BUT TELL ME--WERE YOU SUCCESSFUL IN TRACKING DOWN THE SOURCE OF THAT ANCIENT SCROLL YOU HAD ME VERIFY?
YES, DOCTOR, I THINK AT LAST I HAVE BEEN...

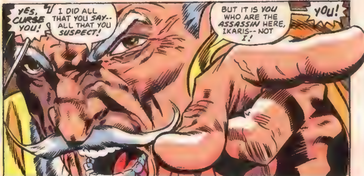
--AND THE TRAIL HAS LED ME RIGHT BACK TO YOU!

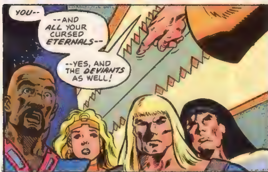

WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?


THESE OTHERS HAVE NOT MET YOU, DAMIAN--AND I TRUSTED YOU, NOT LEAST BECAUSE YOU ARE MARGO'S FATHER!
THUS, I WAS SLOW IN PUTTING TOGETHER THE PIECES OF THE PUZZLE.
THEN, I REMEMBERED THAT YOU HAD USED DEVICES HERE TO VERIFY OUR SCROLL'S AUTHENTICITY...
...AND I SUDDENLY REALIZED IT WAS YOU WHO MUST HAVE CREATED THE PROPHECIES!

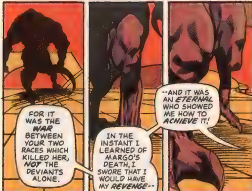

WHY DO YOU ASSAULT THIS POOR HUMAN, IKARIS?
HE IS A SCHOLAR, YES--BUT USING MACHINES DEVISED BY THE CELESTIALS, HE COULD EASILY HAVE ERRED.
YOU LOVED MARGO DAMIAN, IKARIS! WHY DO YOU ACCUSE HER FATHER?
TELL THEM, DAMIAN.


TELL THEM.

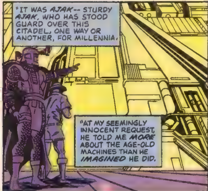

YES, CURSE YOU!
I DID ALL THAT YOU SAY--ALL THAT YOU SUSPECT!
BUT IT IS YOU WHO ARE THE ASSASSIN HERE, IKARIS--NOT I!
YOU!


YOU--
--AND ALL YOUR CURSED ETERNALS--
--YES, AND THE DEVIANTS AS WELL!

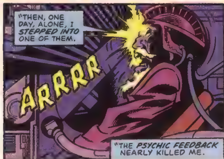

YOU ARE ALL THE MURDERERS OF MY DAUGHTER!



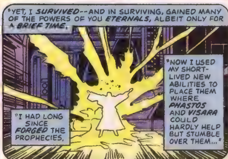
FOR IT WAS THE WAR BETWEEN YOUR TWO RACES WHICH KILLED HER, NOT THE DEVIANTS ALONE.
IN THE INSTANT I LEARNED OF MARGO'S DEATH, I SWORE THAT I WOULD HAVE MY REVENGE--
--AND IT WAS AN ETERNAL WHO SHOWED ME HOW TO ACHIEVE IT!



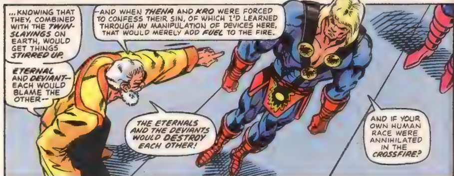
"IT WAS AJAK-- STURDY AJAK, WHO HAS STOOD GUARD OVER THIS CITADEL, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, FOR MILLENNIA.
"AT MY SEEMINGLY INNOCENT REQUEST, HE TOLD ME MORE ABOUT THE AGE-OLD MACHINES THAN HE IMAGINED HE DID.



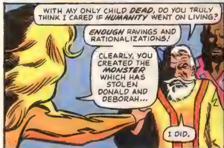
"THEN, ONE DAY, ALONE, I STEPPED INTO ONE OF THEM.
ARRRR
"THE PSYCHIC FEEDBACK NEARLY KILLED ME.



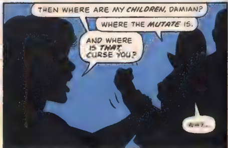
"YET, I SURVIVED--AND IN SURVIVING, GAINED MANY OF THE POWERS OF YOU ETERNALS, ALBEIT ONLY FOR A BRIEF TIME.
"I HAD LONG SINCE FORGED THE PROPHECIES.
"NOW I USED MY SHORT-LIVED NEW ABILITIES TO PLACE THEM WHERE PHASTOS AND VISARA COULD HARDLY HELP BUT STUMBLE OVER THEM..."



...KNOWING THAT THEY, COMBINED WITH THE TWIN-SLAYINGS ON EARTH, WOULD GET THINGS STIRRED UP.
--AND WHEN THENA AND KRO WERE FORCED TO CONFESS THEIR SIN, OF WHICH I'D LEARNED THROUGH MY MANIPULATION OF DEVICES HERE, THAT WOULD MERELY ADD FUEL TO THE FIRE.
ETERNAL AND DEVIANT--EACH WOULD BLAME THE OTHER--
THE ETERNALS AND THE DEVIANTS WOULD DESTROY EACH OTHER!
AND IF YOUR OWN HUMAN RACE WERE ANNIHILATED IN THE CROSSFIRE?



WITH MY ONLY CHILD DEAD, DO YOU TRULY THINK I CARED IF HUMANITY WENT ON LIVING?
ENOUGH RAVINGS AND RATIONALIZATIONS!
CLEARLY, YOU CREATED THE MONSTER WHICH HAS STOLEN DONALD AND DEBORAH...
I DID.



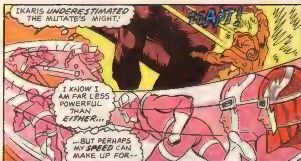
THEN WHERE ARE MY CHILDREN, DAMIAN?
WHERE THE MUTATE IS.
AND WHERE IS THAT CURSE YOU?

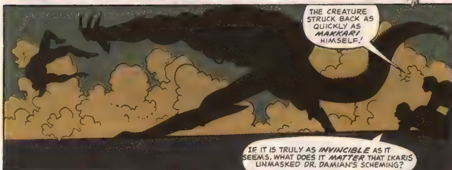
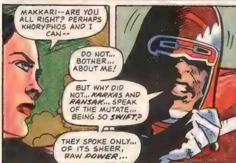
GRRRNG
THRAKK
--RIGHT HERE!
AGGKK
BY THE CELESTIALS!








IKARIS UNDERESTIMATED THE MUTATE'S MIGHT!
I KNOW I AM FAR LESS POWERFUL THAN EITHER...
...BUT PERHAPS MY SPEED CAN MAKE UP FOR--

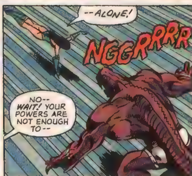
SLAMM
UNNNH--!

THE CREATURE STRUCK BACK AS QUICKLY AS MAKKARI HIMSELF!
IF IT IS TRULY AS INVINCIBLE AS IT SEEMS, WHAT DOES IT MATTER THAT IKARIS UNMASKED DR. DAMIAN'S SCHEMING?

MAKKARI--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? PERHAPS KHORYPHOS AND I CAN--
DO NOT... BOTHER... ABOUT ME!
BUT WHY DID NOT... KARKAS AND RANSAK... SPEAK OF THE MUTATE... BEING SO SWIFT?
THEY SPOKE ONLY... OF ITS SHEER, RAW POWER...

PERHAPS, FELLOW ETERNALS, THEY DO SO BECAUSE--

--IT WAS NOT THAT FAST WHEN IT FOUGHT THEM!


THEN--WHAT MANNER OF THING--*ARE* WE FIGHTING?
SOME *NEW* KIND OF MUTATE, PERHAPS...
YES...


...AND I THINK I'VE FIGURED OUT *WHAT* KIND!
STAY HERE, ALL OF YOU!
SERSI GOES TO ATTACK THE MONSTER--

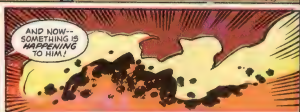

--*ALONE!*
NGGRRRR
NO-- *WAIT!* YOUR POWERS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO--

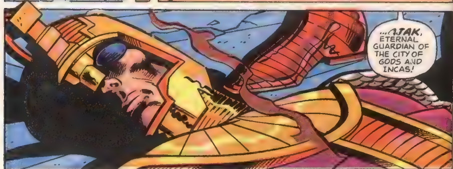
HRRRGGRK
TOO *LATE!* IT HAS HER!
HURRY, ETERNALS! ONLY *TOGETHER* CAN WE HOPE TO SAVE--



WHOMM

THE MUTATE IS *DOWN!*






PART EIGHT... BUT GODS MAY ALSO DIE!
YOU FAILED ME, AJAK--
--FAILED ME, CURSE YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL!
IKARIS-- YOU SEEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED FAR BETTER THAN I DO.
FROM WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKKARI, I THOUGHT THE CREATURE WAS ONE THAT ABSORBED POWERS-- THEN HURLED IT BACK AGAIN--
--BUT I NEVER SUSPECTED THAT IT MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN AJAK!
AND I HAD ONLY BEGUN TO SUSPECT, SERSI.
HE--HE'S SO STILL-- BUT HE CAN'T BE DEAD!
WE ETERNALS CAN'T DIE, UNLESS OUR ATOMS ARE DISPERSED--
--C-CAN WE, IKARIS?
OHHHHH...
HE LIVES, SPRITE.

IKARIS... WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED?
I FEEL AS IF I'M AWAKENING... FROM A NIGHTMARE I CAN'T QUITE RECALL...
IT IS BEST THAT WAY, ETERNAL.
DO NOT SEEK TO REMEMBER.
AJAK... DO YOU REMEMBER ME--THENA?
THENA... YES... BUT IT HAS BEEN CENTURIES SINCE WE LAST SPOKE...
...AND THAT WAS IN OUR OWN OLYMPIA ... NOT IN THIS CITY THE CELESTIALS BUILT AND MEN ONCE RULED.
MY CHILDREN, AJAK-- YOU TOOK THEM, DO YOU REMEMBER?
THENA--
I MUST KNOW, IKARIS! THE TWINS--DONALD AND DEBORAH--
--WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THEM, AJAK?
CHILDREN? I... RECOLLECT NO CHILDREN.
IKARIS... CAN YOU TAKE ME SOME-PLACE?
I NEED... REST...
CHILDREN... TWINS... I DO SEEM TO RECALL SOMETHING ABOUT TWINS, IKARIS...
...FAR OFF, BEYOND THE HORIZON OF MY NIGHTMARE...
DO NOT TRY TO REMEMBER NOW, OLD FRIEND.
THERE WILL BE TIME FOR SUCH THINGS... LATER.
DAMIAN-- YOU WILL TELL ME WHERE MY CHILDREN ARE--
--OR I WILL KILL YOU!
I AM ALREADY LONG DEAD, ETERNAL.
THEN I SHALL MAKE YOU SUFFER, AS NO MAN OR IMMORTAL HAS EVER--
NO...



DONALD...
DEBORAH...
...ALIVE!



COME TO THENA, BOTH OF YOU!
COME TO-- YOUR MOTHER!
SEE, DEB? I TOLD YOU IT WAS SOMETHING WEIRD LIKE THAT!
I'M THE ONE WHO TOLD YOU-- BUT WHO CARES?
I'M JUST GLAD TO BE OUT OF THAT HOLE-- WITHOUT THAT TERMINATOR TYPE STOMPING AROUND!
BUT--THAT THING THAT BROUGHT US HERE-- IT'S NOT ANYWHERE AROUND, IS IT?
DAMIAN, WHY DID YOU NOT HAVE THESE TWINS SLAIN, LIKE THE OTHERS?
WAS IT SOME REMAINING, MINUSCULE SPECK OF HUMAN PITY?
FOOL! ONCE I WAS SURE THEY WERE THENA'S BRATS, I WANTED THEM HELD HERE--
--TILL I COULD HAVE THEM TORN TO PIECES BEFORE THEIR PARENTS' EYES!



IT NO LONGER EXISTS.
THANK GOD! IT HURT KARKAS AND RANSAK-- AND I COULD TELL IT WANTED TO HURT US TOO.
IT WAS--



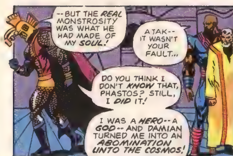
IT WAS I!

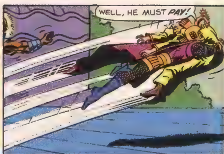


AJAK--HOLD! YOU ARE WEAKENED! DO NOT RACK YOUR BRAIN TRYING TO--
RACK MY BRAIN, ETERNAL? QUITE THE CONTRARY--
NOW THAT THEY'VE STARTED-- I CAN'T TURN THE MEMORIES OFF!

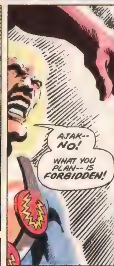


I CAN SEE IT ALL--AS IF IT WERE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW!
DR. DAMIAN-- USING THESE VERY MACHINES--TO TURN ME INTO WHAT SEEMED A LOATHSOME MUTATE--!
HE MADE ME KILL, IKARIS!
HE DRAINED ALL COMPASSION AND PITY FROM ME--AND MADE ME KILL CHILDREN!
THE WORLD SAW MY OUTER FORM AS SOME KIND OF MURDEROUS MONSTER--


--BUT THE REAL MONSTROSITY WAS WHAT HE HAD MADE OF MY SOUL!
AJAK-- IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT...
DO YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT, PHASTOS? STILL, I DID IT!
I WAS A HERO--A GOD--AND DAMIAN TURNED ME INTO AN ABOMINATION UNTO THE COSMOS!


WELL, HE MUST PAY!


WE BOTH MUST PAY!


AJAK-- NO!
WHAT YOU PLAN--IS FORBIDDEN!


WHAT I HAVE DONE--WHAT WE TWO HAVE DONE--THAT IS FORBIDDEN, IKARIS!
MY ONLY CONSOLATION IS THE LOOK OF STARK TERROR IN DAMIAN'S EYES--IN SPITE OF HIMSELF--AN INSTANT BEFORE WE--


AJAK...


HE IS GONE, IKARIS... HE AND DAMIAN, AS IF THEY NEVER WERE.
BUT THEY BOTH *DID* EXIST--UNTIL AJAK DISPERSED HIS OWN ATOMS, AND DAMIAN'S WITH THEM.
DAMIAN WAS *RIGHT*, IN A SENSE.
MARGO-- HIS DAUGHTER--*WAS* A VICTIM OF THE LONG-STANDING ENMITY BETWEEN ETERNAL AND DEVIANT.




DEBBIE... DONALD... I HAVE SO *MUCH* TO EXPLAIN TO YOU BEFORE WE PART...
I'LL JUST *BET!* THE ONLY PROBLEM IS--
ARE WE GONNA BE ABLE TO GET OUR *MINDS* AROUND ANY OF IT?

A FEW MINUTES LATER...



WAS THE DESTRUCTION OF THAT ANCIENT CITY TRULY *NECESSARY*, ETERNALS?

YES. WITH GODS AND INCAS LONG SINCE DEPARTED--WITH AJAK AND DAMIAN BOTH DEAD--IT NO LONGER SERVED ANY *PURPOSE*.

WE COULD NOT RISK THE POSSIBILITY OF IRRESPONSIBLE *HUMANS*-- OR WORSE YET, *DEVIANTS*--MAKING SOME TERRIBLE USE OF WHAT IT CONTAINED.

UH... CAN WE GO *HOME* NOW...

...MOTHER?

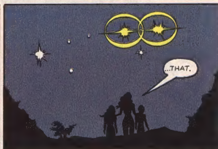
IN A VERY SHORT TIME.

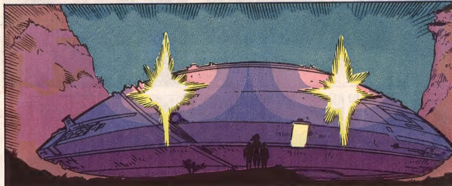
BUT FIRST, THERE IS SOMETHING THE *THREE* OF US MUST *DO*...!

















I FEEL... SO *APART*... SO ASHAMED, NEVER TO HAVE *KNOWN*...

WHILE *MY* SHAME IS THAT I NEVER *TOLD* YOU.

DEBORAH, DONALD... YOU HAVE *HUMAN* PARENTS, AND SHOULD ALWAYS HONOR THEM-- BUT IN ANOTHER SENSE, *THIS* IS YOUR TRUE *FATHER*.

HE IS A GOOD *BEING*... AND IF HE WERE OF THE RACE AMONG WHICH YOU DWELL...

...HE WOULD BE A GOOD *MAN*.


NO MATTER HOW MUCH I TELL THEM, KRO, IT WILL TAKE THEM *TIME* TO ACCEPT WHAT THEY ARE...
...WHAT THEY MAY ONE DAY *BECOME* DESPITE THE FALSENESS OF THE PROPHECY DAMIAN CONCOCTED.
THEY HAVE THE STRENGTH TO *LEARN,* THENA.
THEY *ARE* OUR CHILDREN, AFTER ALL.
AND NOW, I MUST RETURN TO *LEMURIA,* AND THE WORK I HAVE BEGUN THERE.


GOODBYE, MY SON...
FAREWELL, MY DAUGHTER...
AND MAY THE GODS WATCH OVER YOU, DEAR THENA, FOREVER.






FIN?